

NEFRC

Highlights

Monthly Report of the Northeast Florida Regional Council

April 2008

Council President appears on WJCT's First Coast Forum to provide Regional perspective on water issue

The topic of the "Future of the St. Johns River" as it relates to the proposed water withdrawal issue continues to garner attention from so many throughout the Region. As a result of that interest, on Thursday, April 10 at 8 pm, simulcast on WJCT-TV and 89.9 FM, Northeast Florida Regional Council President Harold Rutledge sat on a diverse panel selected to address and debate the water withdrawal issue.

As the Forum revealed to its audience, proposed plans to solve Florida's water crisis are evoking a murky debate over drawing millions of gallons of water from the St. Johns River for use in Central Florida. At issue are the environmental and economic impact this plan could have on Central and Northeast Florida.

This hour-long episode of the First Coast Forum examined this proposal and how it could affect growth, economics and the environment of our community.

Audience members participated in the Forum through e-mailing questions or calling during the program.

The forum was hosted by WJCT's Tom Patton, and the participating panelists included: Neil Armingeon, The St. Johns Riverkeeper; Dr. Courtney Hackney, Director of the Coastal Biology Programs at the University of North Florida; Hal Wilkening, Director of the St. Johns River Water Management District's Department of Resource Management and aforementioned Commissioner Harold Rutledge, President of the Northeast Florida Regional Council.

For more information, contact Michael Hadden at (904) 279-0885 X 104.



From left to right: Dr. Courtney Hackney, Commissioner Harold Rutledge, Tom Patton, Neil Armingeon, and Hal Wilkening appear on the April 10th episode of FIRST COAST FORUM: TAPPING THE ST. JOHNS.

Joint meeting between Regional Councils focuses continued attention on the St. Johns River

One of the "next step" action items that was proposed after the January 25, 2008, Water Supply Summit hosted by the Northeast Florida Regional Council (NEFRC) was a joint meeting with its counterpart, the East Central Florida Regional Planning Council (ECFRPC).

Both Councils have been individually dealing with the water supply issue as it relates to the St. Johns River and brought together members from each body to convene in St. Augustine and discuss the matter face-to-face in the hopes of continued progress in a resolution.

The roundtable discussion was headed by The Honorable Harold Rutledge, President of the NEFRC and The Honorable Teresa Jacobs, Chair of the ECFRPC Board. NEFRC CEO, Brian Teeple and ECFRPC Executive Director, Phil Laurien were both present and actively participated in the discussion.

Kirby Green, Executive Director of the St. Johns River Water Management

(continued)



Mr. Al Glover, Councilman Art Graham and Commissioner Elaine Renick participate in the discussion at the Joint Meeting between Councils.

Joint Meeting between Councils (continued)

District, addressed the crowd relaying his organization's perspective and approach of the situation. At the conclusion of his presentation he entertained questions and was open to working with both regions.

The meeting lasted over two and a half hours, and the group agreed to work towards a joint comprehensive approach that addresses the many related issues starting with conservation and other issues such as growth, regulation, enforcement, and desalinization. It was determined that to accomplish this, it would take additional joint meetings. The next meeting, will take place in the Central Florida Region; time, date and location is forthcoming. All counties, special groups and interested stakeholders will be invited to participate. It was clear as the meeting came to a close, that the members of the ECFRPC and the NEFRC are mutually concerned with the health of the St. Johns River. Both Councils eagerly await the results of scientific studies being performed by the St. Johns River Water Management District, which will determine many of the next steps.

For more information, please contact Brian Teeple at (904) 279-0880.

Leadership Academy tackles issue of Economic Development at recent Program Day

Members of the Northeast Florida Regional Leadership Academy (RLA) gathered at the Baker County School District School Board Facility on April 8, 2008, to discuss the topic of Economic Development and how it affects our Regional Community.

Henry Luke delivered a keynote on Blueprint for Prosperity and Candace Moody represented WorkSource as she shared its perspective as a Regional development organization.

Jerry Mallot of the Jacksonville Regional Chamber of Commerce concluded the day with an overview of the Cornerstone Regional Development Program. Class members presented a best practices group report and broke off into small discussion groups to explore the opportunities for regional cooperation with regard to economic development within the communities of Northeast Florida.

The Closing Retreat for the Class of 2008 is coming up on Wednesday, May 21, in Clay County at the Thrasher-Horne Center for the Arts. Recruitment for the Class of 2009 is underway. All interested parties are encouraged to apply. The RLA Advisory Board will review all applications and make a final decision regarding the new class no later than August 1, 2008.



For more information about the RLA, please visit www.nefrla.com or contact Mike Hadden at (904) 279-0885, X 104.

Members of the Regional Leadership Academy gather in small group discussions to discuss Economic Development impacts on the Region.

Quarterly Transportation Disadvantaged Directors' Meeting

On April 30, Transportation Disadvantaged Directors attended the second regional quarterly TD Directors' Meeting at the Council. The first meeting was recently held in January and was the first one of this kind in over 10 years. The purpose of these meetings is to bring together individuals who work in the same profession, and have the greatest knowledge of the transportation system, to meet and discuss current legislation, regional and state topics, and items of concern with each other and Council staff. Due to the hectic nature of this business, these participants rarely have the opportunity to meet and discuss program concerns. At the request of the attendees, the meetings will continue on a quarterly basis.

Items of discussion on April 30 focused on the Northeast Florida Coordinated Mobility Plan, current legislation to strengthen the coordinated system, and a possible multi-county commuter assistance program feasible study. For more information, please contact Jeanie Palmer at (904) 279-0885 x146.

Agency and Planning Directors Meeting address Regional Issues

The Regional Council hosted the second Quarterly Agency and Planning Directors meeting on April 24, 2008, which brings together planning directors from throughout the Region.

Topics of discussion included a Toolbox Utility resource, the recent joint meeting regarding the St. Johns River water usage issue and a Legislative Session update.

In addition, a regional visioning update was presented - which highlighted the upcoming Regional resource Web site www.Regiz.biz.

For more information, contact Ed Lehman at (904) 279-0885 X 130.

Council's cooperative purchasing association holds quarterly membership meeting

The North Florida Procurement Association, Chapter of NIGP, Inc. (NFPA) - exists to be a source of education, training, research, enhanced communication and peer support for public procurement professionals in the Northeast Florida Region.

The Regional Council provides staff support to this organization now in its third year. On Wednesday, April 16, the NFPA holds its quarterly membership meeting in Council offices. The topic of discussion at the meeting was Anti-Trust Law Crimes, Investigation and Prosecution.

For more about the NFPA visit the Council hosted Web site at www.nf-pa.org